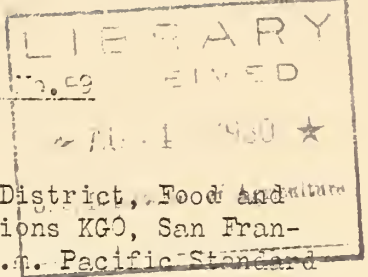


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A radio talk by W. W. Vincent, chief, Western District, Food and Drug Administration, delivered Thursday, ^{Aug. 7} through Stations KGO, San Francisco, KECA, Los Angeles, and KHQ, Spokane, at 9:45 a.m. Pacific Standard Time.

I find my talks are gaining the attention of various trade publications and I note an editorial in one with national circulation wherein the statement is made that, "few consumers pay any attention to labels and that public apathy has accounted for the cynical attitude that so many food manufacturers have assumed toward quality". The article goes further and makes this statement to the packers: "When consumers actually begin to buy by the label, half the trade evils that are plaguing the packers will speedily vanish. Pure foods could be sold above instead of below the cost of production". Further, they indicate that insofar as we can induce the public to read labels we are performing a service of inestimable benefit to the food packing industry. My friends, this is praise indeed, because it is the public primarily that the Food and Drugs Act serves to benefit thru insuring to you a food supply whose purity and wholesomeness is above reproach and a drug supply both pure and properly branded.

In this series of talks I have been relating my personal experiences, telling you of interesting cases in which I have participated, pointing out how certain classes of food commodities have risen and fallen in public favor and later disappeared from the market, - all for the purpose of acquainting you with the extent to which the Federal food and drugs act protects your food supply.

This week I shall relate a couple of stories dealing with the misbranding of fish, whereby the packers sold it at a higher price than would have been the case, had they not applied false and misleading labels. Of course they got into trouble. Your food and drug agents anticipate their activities. I shall also tell you something about how to read canned fish labels.

Remember, I am sending to all those who write to me copies of our "read the Label" information. You cannot help but find this valuable, would you become an intelligent and discriminating buyer.

Now for my fish stories: There are five varieties of salmon packed on the Pacific Coast, - six if you include the steelhead salmon which is a rainbow trout gone to sea and then returned. As is true of all commodities, certain localities are supposed to produce superior products. - This applies to fish also, and the Columbia River Chinook salmon sells for a higher price than Chinook salmon from other localities due both to its supposed or real quality and the years of advertising behind its exploitations.

Chinook salmon is also packed on certain California streams and in the old days one packer, operating on the Columbia River, used to secure the product canned in California, ship it up to his plant on the Columbia River and there apply a label indicating it to be a Columbia River Chinook. Labeled as a Columbia River Chinook it brought a better price than if it were labeled as a California Chinook Salmon.

The federal food and drugs act insures to you that a product labeled as to origin be correct, for it deems misbranded, any food or drug product falsely branded as to the state, territory or country in which it is manufactured or produced.

It was customary for this California packed salmon to come to San Francisco for loading aboard boat for shipment to the Columbia River. On this September day of which I relate your Food and Drug agent located 1969 cases of unlabeled California salmon on a dock at San Francisco. Investigation showed the shipment was en route to a salmon packer at Astoria, Oregon. The inspector anticipated that the material would be labeled as Columbia River Salmon after its arrival at Astoria. How was he going to identify this material after it bore a Columbia River Salmon label? He would probably have to testify in Federal Court that this material was actually packed in California and prove his testimony to the satisfaction of a jury. What did he do in order that he could so identify it?

He opened up a great many cases and on the individual tins supplied a small code mark such as the canner himself might have used. He likewise code-marked the cases, and then notified his co-worker in Oregon that this shipment was en route to his territory. His colleague maintained a surveillance of that fish upon its arrival in Astoria and learned that shortly the product was being labeled as "Royal Chinook Salmon Fancy Columbia River Salmon, Packed at Astoria, Oregon". Shipments of this so-called Columbia River Salmon began to move in December, consigned to various points in the United States. It was but a little time until the identical cans stamped by the Inspector on the dock at San Francisco, were again in the San Francisco laboratory for examination. They had been purchased by your Government agent in New York City as Columbia River Salmon.

Of course an action was immediately instituted in the Federal Court at Portland, Oregon. The packer attempted a denial of such a practice, but on the date set for trial, went into court, pleaded guilty and paid the fine which his offense justified.

My friends, I could relate numerous cases, wherein the food and drugs act has served to prevent your receiving a cheaper grade of fish, than was specified upon the label.

Now I want to tell you a story about a dealer in New York who decided he would make a lot of money thru the sale of certain fish as tuna, rather than under its proper label which would have read either "Bonita" or "Yellowtail", varieties that command a lesser price. All the tuna packed in the continental United States is canned at San Diego, and in the Los Angeles Harbor districts. There are four kinds of tuna packed. At the time of catching them the fishermen generally secure some bonita and yellowtail fish, both of which species, when canned in the same manner as the tunas, are indistinguishable from tuna to those people not familiar with the different kinds. They do, however, lack certain qualities of texture and flavor possessed by the tuna, and in that respect are inferior. The New York concern of which I speak purchased a lot of unlabeled bonita and yellowtail and shipped it to their place of business in New York.

For some years now, it has been the practice of your food and drug agents to report to our eastern stations, all shipments of unlabeled yellowtail and bonita. There it is ascertained that it is labeled correctly.

This New York dealer received his bonita and yellowtail and applied labels indicating it was a standard California tuna packed for him. Thereafter he began to make interstate shipments, which were of course examined and later seized. This dealer was brought to trial and fined \$500 for his venture into the bonita business under tuna labels.

What is the motive that prompts a dealer to misbrand his fish in this manner? I will tell you. It is \$1.50 per case. A carload of bonita - 1000 cases - labeled and sold as tuna brings the unscrupulous dealer \$1500 illegitimate profit!

My friends, there have been a number of dealers and several packers who have resorted to similar practices in the past - I think we caught the last of this type of packer not over three months ago. I am certain you now realize that were there no Federal food and drugs act you would have purchased a great, great deal of fish under both tuna and red salmon labels that was not labeled truthfully. Today, I can assure you, that it is with reasonable certainty you can believe the statements upon your canned fish labels.

In order to buy salmon intelligently you should know that the Red Salmon is called by different names. For example, when packed in Alaska it is generally labeled as Red Alaska Salmon; if packed on Puget Sound it is generally labeled as Sockeye Salmon; whereas if packed upon the Columbia River it may be designated as either Red Columbia River Salmon or Columbia River Sockeye or again as Blueback Salmon.

Red Salmon, when packed in 1 lb. tall cans, usually commands the best price, primarily because of its color. The Puget Sound Red Salmon, or Sockeye, when packed in flat cans generally sells at about the same price as the Columbia River Chinook, the majority of which is likewise packed in flat cans.

The Chinook Salmon is also known as the "King Salmon" or "Spring Salmon". The latter names are generally used by concerns packing in Alaska. Columbia River packers almost universally use the name Chinook.

The Medium Red Salmon is known both as Coho Salmon or Silver Salmon. The meat is not quite so red as the two species previously mentioned nor does the fish upon opening seem to contain ^{quite} so much oil.

The Pink Salmon, known in the trade as "humpback", is generally labeled "Pink". Frequently, low grades of Pink Salmon are labeled just as "Salmon", no mention being made as to species.

The Chum Salmon is often labeled as either "Keta" or "Chum". It is known in the trade as "Dog Salmon". It commands the lowest price of all salmon canned, due primarily to its greyish color. Salmon labels which do not declare the variety of fish contained within the can, can generally be assumed to contain Chum Salmon or low grade salmon of other species.

When buying canned salmon, if you desire a particular species, you must read the label to insure that the name is specified. You cannot be certain that a brand name upon which no species is declared will always contain the same species of fish.

As to tuna fish, there are four species canned in this country. The albacore, otherwise known as the longfin tuna, commands the best price due to whiteness of the meat. Upon the labels you will generally find the words "white meat" and maybe a reference to "finest quality".

The Yellowfin and Bluefin tuna, the latter being known as the Leaping Tuna, have meat slightly darker in appearance than the albacore and many packers in describing these fish use the phrase "light meat only" upon their labels. They sell at about the same price, which is less than albacore commands.

The Striped Tuna, smallest of all the tunas packed, costs the least. If labeled "tuna" the word "Striped" may be found across the body of the fish as pictured on the label; or, again, no reference to species may appear. Ordinarily the meat has a gamey flavor and is the darkest of all the tunas. The majority of the Striped Tuna, or Skipjack as known in the trade, goes into the "tonno style" of pack. In this country "tonno" or "tunny fish" as it is sometimes labeled, is packed in the identical manner as are the other tunas, except a double amount of salt is added and olive oil employed to fill the cans. Cottonseed oil is generally used in the other varieties and the label may or may not make reference to it. Most of the "tonno" is consumed by people of Italian lineage

If you desire the imported "tonno" you get a slightly different product, because a different species of tuna is caught in the Mediterranean and in the preparation of the fish they brine it, which is not the practice in this country.

Bonita and Yellowtail fish are likewise canned "tonno style", and that is, with olive oil and double salt, and the labels most frequently employed read "White Meat Fish of the Bonita or Yellowtail". It may also be labeled either Bonita or Yellowtail as the case may be, with the added designation "Packed Tonno Style".

My friends, if you read your tuna labels carefully you will not get Bonita or Yellowtail at an albacore or White Meat price.

Next week I expect to tell you about a sirup manufacturer who visualized the sale of more maple sirup than this country produces. It was but a vision, however, because your food and drug agents anticipated his desires. Incidentally I will tell you more about how to read labels.

If you have not already done so, write to W. W. Vincent, U. S. Food & Drug Laboratory, San Francisco, California, should you desire our "Read the Label" information. New correspondents will receive in addition to the information on tuna and salmon all material heretofore distributed.

